

FIGURE 1A

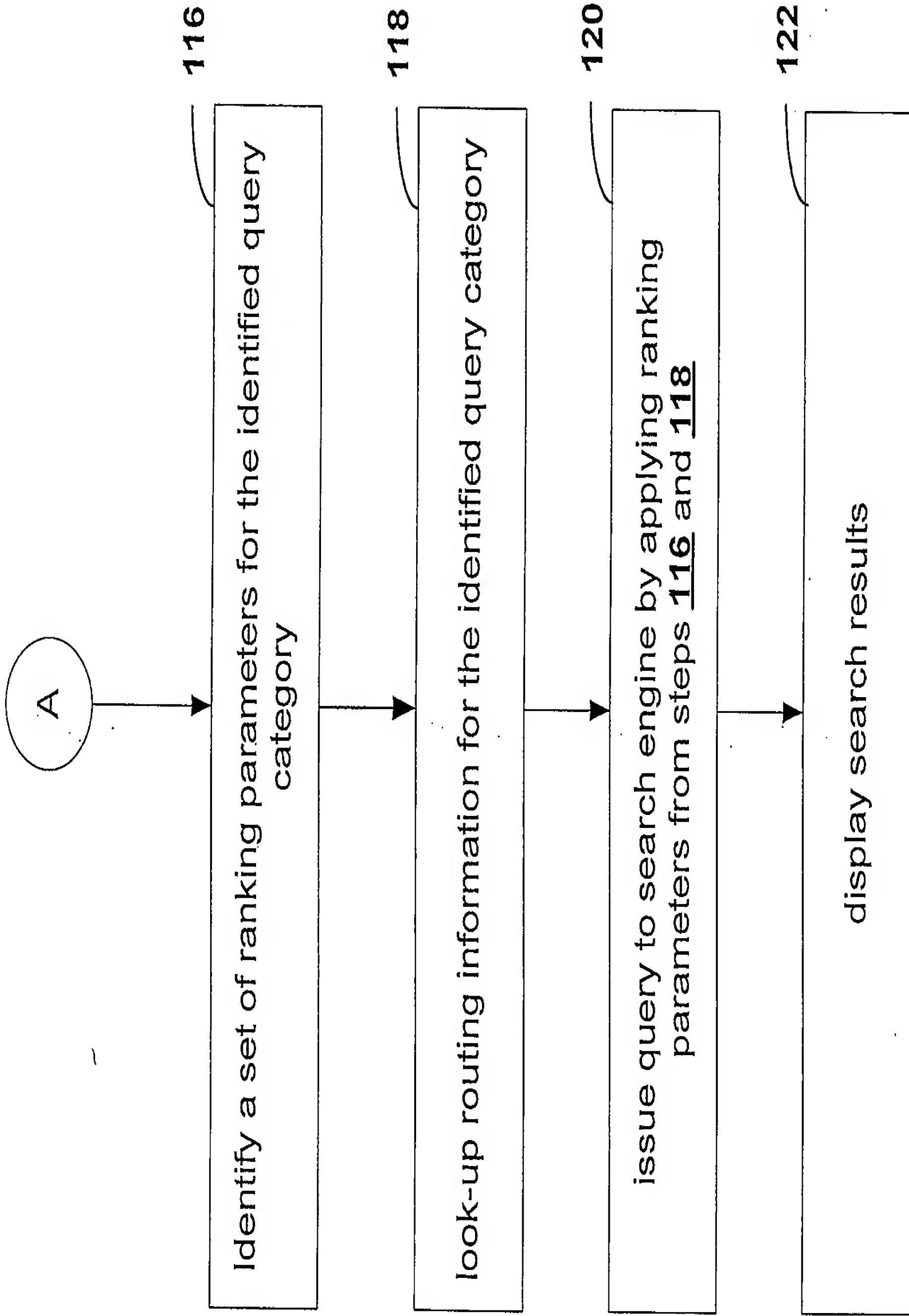


FIGURE 1B

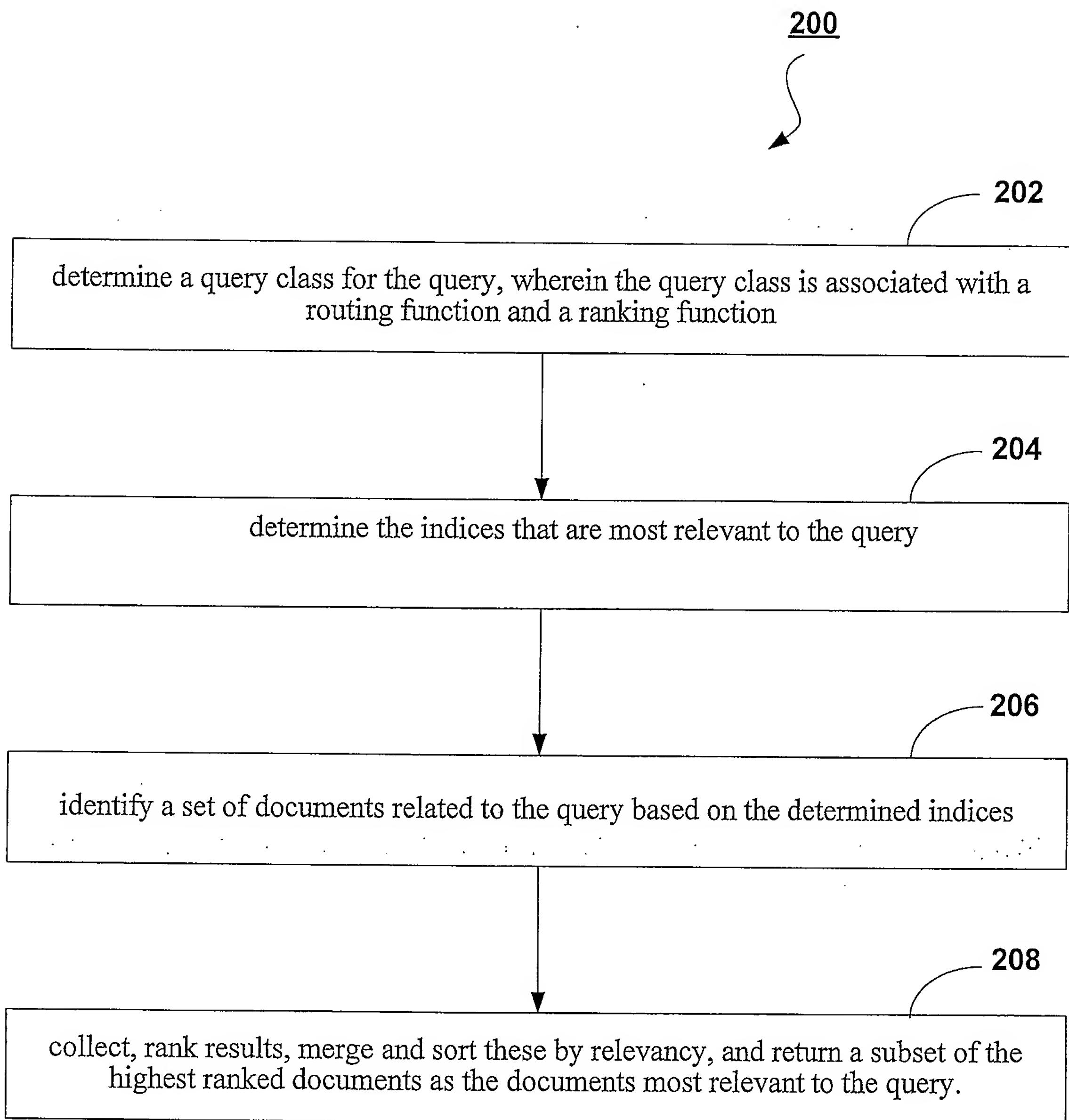


FIGURE 2

302

analyze user profile data, user search context and history data, query log files, and index statistics, as well as other query related external data that seems to be relevant or helpful to determine a query class for said search query

304

based upon the analysis of step 302, identify a query class and associate with the search query

FIGURE 3

402

use ranking function that is associated to the determined query class

404

forward search query and ranking function to the search engine(s) that manage
the selected indicies

FIGURE 4

502

each search result item has a (normalized) score

504

collect all results from step 206 of Figure 2

506

sort search results by score in decreasing order (assume high score is better)

508

return top k results from sorted list of search results from the merged search result list to the user

FIGURE 5